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Table or counter mat

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Title: TABLE OR COUNTER MAT

The following statement is a full description of this invention, including the best method of performing it known to me/us:-

TABLE OR COUNTER MAT

Technical Field

This invention relates to a table or counter mat that lies flat and is readily laundered. The invention is particularly related to a device to protect and provide a functional non-slip absorbent and message communication covering for hospitality bar tops although the invention is not limited to such use.

Background Art

The product used by the hospitality industry, including hotels, clubs and restaurants for absorbing spilt liquids on bar tops is generally in the form of strips of cotton towelling.

Problems experienced by hotel operators with the towelling product is that it slips on the work surface. It also wrinkles, bunches up in an unsightly appearance and it presents an unstable surface where glasses may topple over, spilling the contents. Towelling tends to lose colour and shrink in the washing process, further detracting from its appearance and presentation of the bar.

In addition, when the towelling product carries a printed brand message, there is a loss of colour, shrinkage and creasing which greatly detracts from the brand image and diminishes the investment value for the brand owner.

It is also known to have floor mats which may have a rubber backing and a top tufted pile of some 2 or more centimetres or alternatively a plurality of upwardly extending rubber fingers. However, such articles are used as floor mats with the upper layer having a physical mode of operation of brushing dirt or mud or the like from soles of shoes and allowing the residue dirt to fall within the spaces between the fingers or tufts of carpet. In essence such a

structure is like a form of an upturned brush and is not liquid absorbent or providing a stable surface. Such an article is therefore not practical or useable as table or counter mats.

DISCLOSURE OF INVENTION

It is an object of the invention to provide a table or counter mat that overcomes one or more of the disadvantages of the prior art.

In accordance with the invention there is provided a table or counter mat having a composite sheet structure comprising a non-slip backing layer, a top liquid absorbent textile surface for resting cups mugs or glasses, and an intermediate stabilisation layer joining the backing layer to the textile surface wherein the resultant mat is absorbent and readily able to be laundered. The non-slip backing layer can be formed from rubber such as a nitrile rubber of less than 2 mm thick with a density of about 1000 grams per square metre. The intermediate stabilisation layer can comprise a heat curable material non-woven polyester curable at temperatures greater than 100°C and preferably at about 170°C and wherein the mat is able to be laundered in hot water.

The textile surface of the table or counter mat can include a textile marking providing a print or advertising message viewable from above. This can be formed by a sublimation textile printing process as will be further detailed hereinafter. Preferably the sublimation printing occurs at greater than 100°C and preferably greater than 170°C such that the mat is able to be laundered in hot water.

The top liquid absorbent textile surface can be formed from a polyester surface with a pile height substantially in the range of 3 to 7 millimetres. Another embodiment has the top liquid absorbent textile surface formed from a tufted nylon cut pile surface with a pile height

substantially in the range of 5 to 10 millimetres. However this textile surface receives its colour marking by an acid dye process.

The invention also provides a method of forming a table or counter mat including the steps of forming a nitrile rubber sheet material as a backing layer, forming an intermediate layer of non-woven polyester fabric, forming a textile surface layer to form an upper layer, aligning all three layers and compressing the layed up materials by a heated platen for a selected time duration, pressure and temperature settings to cure and bond the nitrile rubber backing to the intermediate layer and upper textile layer, wherein the resultant table or counter mat lays flat and is able to stably support a glass or other similar liquid vessel with the table or counter mat liquid absorbent to absorb any spilled liquid.

The step of the curing and bonding of the nitrile rubber backing to the intermediate layer and upper textile layer occurs preferably at greater than 100°C and preferably greater than 170°C such that the mat is able to be laundered in hot water.

The step of providing a sublimation printing process can be by using a screen printed or digital image print paper which carries the required design and placing on the upper textile layer surface of the bar runner blank with print face down and activating a heat platen to press the screen print or digital image print paper to the textile surface under a selected heat, pressure and time duration. Preferably both the curing and bonding of the nitrile rubber backing to the intermediate layer and upper textile layer occurs at greater than 100°C and preferably greater than 170°C and the sublimation printing occurs at greater than 100°C and preferably greater than 170°C sch that the mat is able to be laundered in hot water.

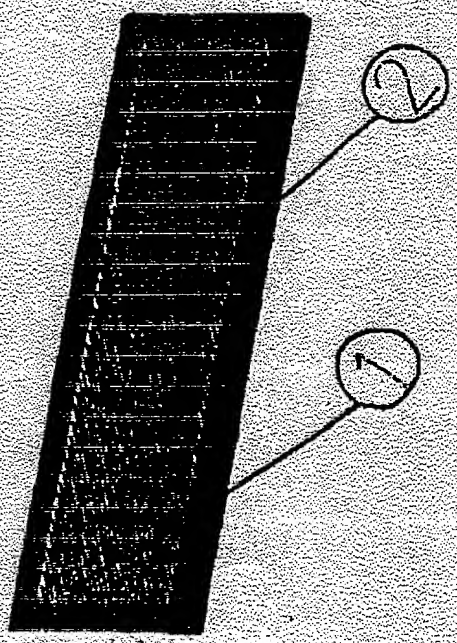
CLAIMS DEFINING THE INVENTION:

1. A table or counter mat having a composite sheet structure comprising a non-slip backing layer formed from rubber, a top liquid absorbent textile surface for resting cups, mugs or glasses, and an intermediate stabilisation layer joining the backing layer to the textile surface wherein the resultant mat is absorbent and readily able to be laundered.

2. A table or counter mat according to claim 1 wherein the non-slip backing layer is formed from a nitrile rubber and wherein the textile surface includes a textile marking providing a colouring or a print or advertising message viewable from above.

3 A table or counter mat according to claim 1 or 2 wherein the nitrile rubber is in the range of less than 2 mm thick with a density of about 1000 grams per square metre, and wherein the intermediate stabilisation layer comprises a heat curable non-woven polyester material curable at temperatures greater than 100°C and preferably at about 170°C with the non-woven polyester having a density of about 450 to 650 grams per square metre and the textile marking is formed by a sublimation textile printing process which occurs at greater than 100°C and preferably greater than 170°C; whereby the mat is able to be laundered in hot water.

FIG. 1



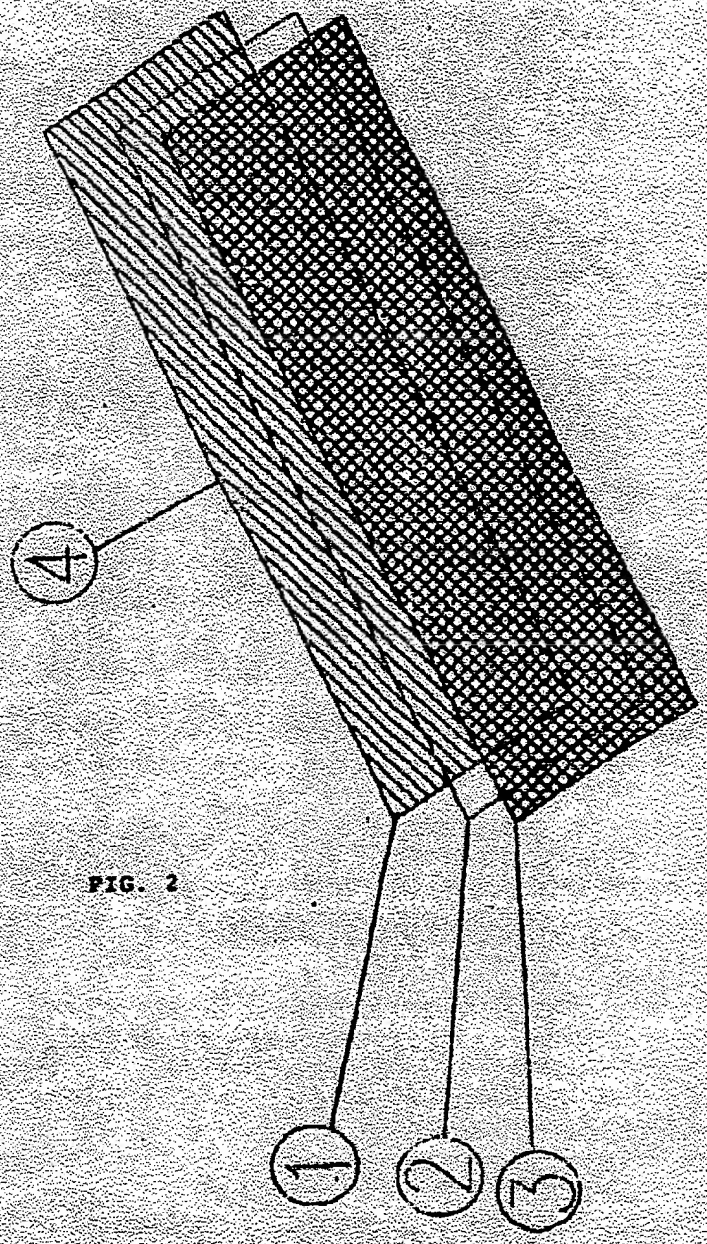


FIG. 2

ABSTRACT

A table or counter mat having a composite sheet structure comprising a non-slip backing layer 3; a top liquid absorbent textile surface 1 for resting cups, mugs or glasses; and an intermediate stabilisation layer 2 joining the backing layer 3 to the textile surface 1 wherein the resultant mat is absorbent and readily able to be laundered. The invention also provides a method of forming the table or counter mat by curing and bonding of the nitrile rubber backing layer 3 to the intermediate layer 2 and upper polyester textile layer 1 at greater than 100°C and preferably greater than 170°C and a sublimation printing 4 for printing on the textile layer 1 occurs at greater than 100°C and preferably greater than 170°C such that the mat is able to be laundered in hot water.